

currently no clinical guidance on advising patients regarding complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). This study aims to explore UK dietitians experience and views on CAM treatments and on patient inquiries on CAM.

Methods: A questionnaire was specifically designed to survey the opinions and experiences of dietitians relating to CAM. Questions related to three main themes: Professional characteristics of sample population; Opinions and experiences of CAM; and Opinions and experiences of evidence-based dietetic practice. Dietitians at all dietetic departments within London NHS trusts, plus those registered freelance were invited to participate in an online survey. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics

Results: Responses totaled n=187. While 38.6% of dietitians had personal experience of one or more CAM therapies, most dietitians (81.9%) had inquired on at least one CAM therapy, including unconventional diets (68%), Homeopathy (27%), Acupuncture (24%). Of those 47.2% gave advice, although 72% indicated that they did not feel confident in doing so. Despite many expressing concerns about inadequate regulation (79.5%) and insufficient evidence base (56.6%) for CAM, most respondents (72.1%) felt that at least one CAM therapy should be more widely used in mainstream healthcare.

Conclusion: Dietitians are often faced with patient inquiries regarding CAM. Most respondents reported feeling confident in the effectiveness of one or more CAM therapies in managing adverse health conditions, and favored wider use of CAM in mainstream healthcare. As nearly half of dietitians surveyed gave advice regarding CAM, it is important that dietitians are led by the evidence base and not by personal opinion. Therefore further training or guidelines on dealing with inquiries is warranted.

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Attitudes/beliefs towards CAM among Croatian healthcare professionals

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Purpose: Croatian healthcare system has seen an ever increasing number of patients seeking opinion and advice on complementary and alternative treatment options. For years only some of the traditional treatments had been practiced in local communities though, but on the verge of law and mostly in rural areas. Post-socialist settings and transition processes have facilitated and strengthened the pluralism of the healthcare system. However, despite recommendations of the European Commission (EC, 1997) and WHO, Croatia has insofar failed to regulate CAM by law. This study brings the results of the attitudes and beliefs of healthcare professionals: physicians, nurses/paramedics and physiotherapists towards CAM.

Methods: The study was carried out on a sample of 325 healthcare professionals affiliated with either private or public healthcare facilities divided into three groups based on their professional and educational background, gender, the number

of years in service and their responses to IMAQ (Integrative Medicine Attitude Questionnaire) items.

Results: Our study proved the existence of differences in CAM-related attitudes expressed by physicians as opposed to nurses and physiotherapists ($F=7.853921$; $p=0.000$); however, differences in attitudes expressed by nurses and physiotherapists failed to be found ($\delta=1.531$; $p=1.000$). This study failed to reveal any gender-based ($T=-1.411$; $p=0.159$), educational background-based ($F=2.372303$; $p=0.095$) and years-in-service-based ($F=0.833$; $p=0.436$) differences in CAM-related attitudes expressed by healthcare providers under study. The most striking differences in attitudes were found to arise on the grounds of various professional backgrounds of healthcare providers comprised by the study. Significant differences in CAM-related attitudes were proven to exist between physicians and nurses/physiotherapists ($F=7.853921$, $p=0.000$), but not between nurses and physiotherapists ($\delta=1.531$, $p=1.000$).

Conclusion: Physicians are far less prone to support alternative and spiritual treatment practices than nurses/paramedics and physiotherapists. The reason should probably be sought in the traditional formal education and curricula of academic institutions educating Croatian healthcare professionals with the lack of formal CAM education.

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Curriculum Development of a Research Laboratory Methodology Course for Complementary and Integrative Medicine Students



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Purpose: Training in fundamental laboratory methodologies is valuable to medical students because it enables them to understand the published literature, critically evaluate clinical studies, and make informed decisions regarding patient care. Towards this end, the National College of Natural Medicine's (NCNM) Master of Science in Integrative Medicine Research (MSiMR) program developed a mandatory Introduction to Laboratory Methods course. The objective is to train students in basic laboratory skills, to analyze and manage data, and judiciously assess biomedical studies. This presentation will describe the course development, implementation and an analysis of course outcomes as it applies to complementary and integrative medicine students.

Methods: Students were surveyed at the beginning and end of the course to assess their understanding and confidence in performing laboratory-based experiments and determine if this course augmented it. Additionally, an analysis of their performance over 7 course offerings was performed.

Results: Analysis of the survey results were compiled from 18 students over 3 terms. The survey results revealed that students had an increased understanding of basic laboratory methodology ($p=0.001$) and significantly increased